

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 145

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 13

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 145—Relative to California Healthy Schools Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 30, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 145, Brownley. California Healthy Schools Day.

This measure would recognize April 26, 2010, as California Healthy Schools Day, and would encourage schools and school districts to take proactive and preventative steps to create and maintain healthy school environments.

WHEREAS, One in five Californians spend their days in California's 12,000 public and private schools, including more than six million children who spend an average of 30 to 50 hours per week in school; and

WHEREAS, Over one-half of schools in the United States have problems linked to unhealthy indoor air quality, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and some classrooms in California have problems of inadequate ventilation, high formaldehyde concentrations, moisture and mold, and toxic residues in dust, according to a study by the State Air Resources Board; and

WHEREAS, Children's developing bodies are more vulnerable to air toxins because they breathe in more air per pound of body weight; and

WHEREAS, Poor indoor environmental quality is associated with a wide range of problems, including poor concentration, learning difficulties, respiratory illnesses such as asthma, headaches, fatigue, organ damage, and other serious health effects; and

WHEREAS, An average of one out of every six schoolage children in California has asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism from a chronic illness, accounting for approximately 1.9 million missed schooldays each year. Teachers and custodians have high rates of work-related asthma, and report exposures to cleaning products as a cause of their asthma; and

WHEREAS, California schools lose an estimated \$40 million per year for pupils' asthma-related absences, and lose additional funds from workers' compensation claims related to exposure to or injury from cleaning products; and

WHEREAS, Hazardous ingredients in cleaning products contribute to poor indoor air quality, as documented in numerous studies, and conventional cleaning products often contain ingredients, including fragrances and preservatives, known to cause cancer, asthma, reproductive harm, organ damage, and other serious health effects; and

WHEREAS, The lack of full disclosure of chemical ingredients in cleaning products makes it difficult to know what hazards are in cleaning products used in schools; and

WHEREAS, Schools should choose less toxic cleaning products, and cleaning products should be used during periods of time when children are not present and when adequate ventilation is available. Schools are encouraged to follow federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and state health guidelines for required disinfection and sanitation practices; and

WHEREAS, Currently the United States Environmental Protection Agency does not allow environmentally preferable claims for any disinfecting cleaner, sanitizer, or any other antimicrobial product regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. Sec. 136 et seq.); and

WHEREAS, Cleaning products are intended for routine cleaning and maintenance, including, but not limited to, general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, carpet cleaners, glass cleaners, floor cleaners, floor finishes, floor strippers, hand cleaners, and soaps; and

WHEREAS, There are hundreds of widely available and cost-competitive cleaning products that are less toxic and do not contain ingredients known to cause cancer, asthma, reproductive harm, aquatic toxicity, and other environmental hazards; and

WHEREAS, Training for school staff in the use of less toxic cleaners is available at no cost through numerous vendors, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies; and

WHEREAS, Research has shown improved indoor air quality provides a healthier and safer learning environment for children, teachers, and staff, and also improves academic achievement and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Schools that have switched to less toxic cleaning products that do not contain ingredients known to cause cancer, asthma, reproductive harm, organ damage, aquatic toxicity, and other environmental hazards have improved indoor air quality, reduced absenteeism, lowered their costs, and acted proactively to safeguard the health of pupils and staff; and

WHEREAS, Actions that schools take to improve indoor air quality and switch to less toxic cleaning products can be eligible for recognition as part of broader green, healthy, and high-performance school certification programs; and

WHEREAS, April 26, 2010, is National Healthy Schools Day, sponsored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of Energy, and more than 35 other organizations, and is observed by communities across the country to celebrate and promote healthy school environments for all children through the use of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program, focusing in the year 2010 on the use of less toxic cleaning products that help reduce pollutants from indoor air; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California recognizes April 26, 2010, as California Healthy Schools Day; and be it further

Resolved, That schools are encouraged to take proactive and preventative steps to create and maintain healthy school environments, including training all staff on best maintenance practices, developing and implementing self-assessments and indoor environmental quality management plans such as following the guidance provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program, using less toxic cleaning products, implementing integrated pest management programs, and ensuring adequate ventilation, as recommended by the State Air Resources Board and the State Department of Public Health; and be it further

Resolved, That school districts are encouraged to consider purchasing less toxic cleaning products that do not contain ingredients known to cause cancer, asthma, reproductive harm, organ damage, aquatic toxicity, and other environmental hazards that are available at discounted rates through cooperative purchasing agreements or other public procurement entities, provided that schools continue to follow federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and state health guidelines for required disinfection and sanitation practices; and be it further

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Secretary for Education; the Directors of the State Department of Public Health, the State Air Resources Board, the Department of General Services, and the California Environmental Protection Agency; and to the author for appropriate distribution.